

The Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is called to order.

Today the subcommittee meets to discuss the issue of nuclear proliferation and technologies associated with nuclear energy.

We will focus on the status of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program funded through the State Department, the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, and related topics. We will also consider the question of the viability of high-temperature gas reactors versus sodium fast reactors as alternative sources of energy. This concept holds great potential for future energy sources for our domestic consumption and may have nonproliferation implications as well.

There could hardly be a more urgent subject than nuclear nonproliferation, specifically keeping weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of rogue entities. As President Bush famously expressed it: “we will not allow the world's worst leaders to threaten us with the world's worst weapons.” We meet to explore

the wisest course for keeping such dangerous technology away from bad actors.

The question of sharing nuclear technology speaks directly to the recent Administration agreement with India, an agreement I support. And this general subject speaks to some of the major hotspots in the world today—North Korea, Iran, Russia, etc. How we should proceed with this technology given the various challenges in various countries is what our panel will help us explore.

Specifically, our witnesses will address: should the US extend nonproliferation and threat reduction assistance to a greater number of nations, particularly as the focus of these efforts has shifted from concerns about the loss of control of Russian weapons and materials to concerns about the possible terrorist acquisition of weapons of mass destruction? Can the US afford to shift resources out of programs in the former Soviet Union or should it, instead, add to its total level of funding to assist more areas?

On the subject of energy: after a lull of about thirty years, the US is again moving forward on nuclear energy technology with programs such as the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) and the Next Generation reactors. As we have seen with recent nuclear energy proposals with Russia, India, and other global partners. There is an opportunity to place these technologies in foreign countries as well as gather the benefits in the US. On the international front these technologies can reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation as well as reduce the world's dependence on fossil fuels while enhancing US stature and influence.

I am especially excited about the benefits of nuclear high temperature gas reactor technology. This technology holds the promise of multiple advances over present water based technologies. The design is inherently safe, even without the extensive control and safety technology required with present reactors. The reactor can use plutonium as a fuel and reduce the amount in the spent output by ninety-five percent. The reactor can also burn spent fuel from other reactors, thus reducing the load on

repositories such as Yucca Mountain and others around the world. The temperatures at which the reactor runs will lead to the production of hydrogen, which can be used in future hydrogen based applications. The Department of Energy is working on sodium cooled fast reactor technology, which also has the promise to reduce the stockpile of weapons grade nuclear material. After a long dry spell in us nuclear technology, it's good to see a couple of promising solutions on the horizon which will be of interest to the world.

Whether the nuclear industry is capable of both addressing domestic energy needs and assisting in nonproliferation concerns will be considered. I believe that, in this sense, energy policy *is* foreign policy.

Our first witness today is a familiar face. Frank Record has served as the Acting Assistant Secretary of State of the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation since May 2006. Prior to that, he served as a senior professional staff member on this Committee from 1990-2004, where he worked international

organizations, trade and security related issues. Since then, he's been at the Department of State and is now in this critical capacity. Welcome. Our outside witnesses include John Kotek, Manager of Nuclear Programs at the Washington Policy & Analysis, Inc.; Mark Haynes, Vice President for Energy Development and Washington Operations, General Atomics and Leonard Spector, Deputy Director, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies. Distinguished experts, all.

The subcommittee will be interested in learning our panelists' insight into this subject. We look forward to hearing from you.

At this point, I yield to my distinguished colleague, Mr. Della-hunt [phonetic].